

under Public Land Order 898 which withdrew 56,011 acres of public land for military use. In 1986—P.L. 99-606—and 1999—P.L. 106-65—Congress enacted legislation on this general subject by withdrawing additional public lands for military activities. The law passed in 1999 was especially noteworthy. This law represented a major change to the local customs, culture, and economy because it withdrew approximately 201,933 acres of land for military use for 20 years. The Fallon Range Training Complex now encompasses more than 230,000 acres of public land because of numerous map revisions and land surveys by the BLM since 1999. These land withdrawals, which took effect on November 6, 2001, expire on November 5, 2021, absent congressional reauthorization.

While this history is important, it is also important to understand that the history in this area did not begin when the military became an integral part of the community. One such example is the Walker River Paiute Tribe, a federally recognized sovereign nation. One range, Bravo 19, of the larger Fallon Range Training Complex, is located directly adjacent to WRPT reservation land and the Navy, as far back as 1942, has conducted military testing and training on lands adjacent to the WRPT reservation. The National Congress of American Indians—NCAI—go into more detail on the close physical proximity between these entities in Resolution No. ECWS-19004. The NCAI notes that the Walker River Paiute reservation land is “south and adjacent to Bravo 19, which is one of the training areas for Naval Air Station (NAS) Fallon” and that the “Navy has encumbered tribal land (est. 6,000 acres), which has been contaminated with live ordnance, caused historical damage to range wells and facilities and has left such land useless as this land cannot be totally cleaned up of ordnance and bombs.”

The Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe has an equally important mark on the history of this unique area in northern Nevada. As detailed by the Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada in Resolution 06-ITCN-19, the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe is federally recognized and have lived, hunted, and prayed on their ancestral lands which encompass many significant areas in this region of the Silver State. This has resulted in a range of issues for the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe, including, but not limited to, access to traditional lands, including spiritual and cultural sites. These impacts are not trivial to the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe, but it should be noted that the current Chairman of the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe, Len George, published a piece in their March 2020 Tribal newsletter expressing his support for reauthorization of the existing withdrawn lands, but not for the expansion as proposed by the Navy.

The broader community in and around NAS Fallon also has a long his-

tory with this military base. Churchill County and the city of Fallon are the proud home of NAS Fallon, and both want to remain the proud home of NAS Fallon. That being said, this military base and training range is only one part of a larger community which each have to work together to balance its activities on public land against a range of other interrelated activities such as agriculture, clean energy development, hunting, outdoor recreation, and mining.

Given these factors, it is easy to understand the amount of attention the Department of Navy received in August of 2016 when it published its notice in the Federal Register that it was initiating its process under the National Environmental Policy Act to “assess the potential environmental consequences of maintaining and modernizing the Fallon Range Training Complex (FRTC) in Nevada, which would include land range expansion through additional land withdrawal and land acquisition, airspace modifications, and public land withdrawal renewal.” Scoping meetings drew hundreds of attendees, and the Navy’s Draft Environmental Impact Statement resulted in the submission of nearly 1,500 unique comments. Unfortunately, the robust scoping meetings and good-faith efforts to work together ultimately has not fully resolved some of the fundamental issues with the Navy’s proposal. The shortcomings of this process have been apparent and was captured in 2018 by our former and our current Governor in letters sent to the Navy in December 2018 and November 2019. Since then, the Navy has undertaken a serious effort to understand local concerns through a series of ongoing discussions and pledged commitments.

The National Environmental Policy Act process was subsequently completed in March of 2020 with a signed Record of Decision from the Navy. The Navy’s ROD proposes an expansion that includes approximately 600,000 acres of public land and approximately 66,000 acres of private land located primarily in Churchill County, but affecting a total of five counties. When considering associated airspace modifications, the Navy’s proposal will affect over half of all Nevada counties. While affected counties, Tribes, and State agencies worked with the Navy to identify key assurances in the ROD, which reflected the Navy’s serious engagement, the ROD could not and did not alleviate all concerns.

Shortly before the Navy made their decision in March of 2020, Senator ROSEN, Congressman HORSFORD, and I wrote a letter to the Senate and House Armed Services Committees where we noted that the lack of consensus left us with “no choice other than to initiate our own process to gather input from as many of our constituents as possible.”

With regards to both sections of the National Defense Authorization Act, we continue to seek that consensus,

and I would note in particular that Governor Sisolak and his administration have been helpful with this effort, especially in working with affected counties and the Nevada Association of Counties to bring State agencies, local governments, and Tribes together. I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of Churchill County which also worked with the State and the aforementioned stakeholders to collaboratively compile a list of outstanding concerns and suggested means of addressing those concerns with the Navy’s proposal. The combined efforts from stakeholders in our State has been an invaluable resource.

In the meantime, I appreciate that this bill does not attempt to force a solution upon the Silver State which has virtually no support from my constituents. Rather, by authorizing new 20-year extensions of the public land withdrawals, it removes uncertainty by reinforcing the critical mission of the U.S. military in Nevada and its efforts to modernize while enabling Federal, State, local, and Tribal stakeholders to continue their dialogue to find the right way forward.

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. President, I thank the Senator for her leadership on this matter and share her commitment to working together with our constituents in Nevada to reach a consensus proposal. While critical concerns remain, Nevada’s congressional delegation has a long history of finding pragmatic solutions to public land challenges, and I look forward to working with Senator CORTEZ MASTO, Congressman AMODEI, and the rest of the delegation to continue this tradition.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I thank the Senator for her partnership.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Roberts, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 451. An act to repeal the requirement to reallocate and auction the T-Band spectrum, to amend the Wireless Communications and Public Safety Act of 1999 to clarify acceptable 9-1-1 obligations or expenditures, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.